

The Gadabout.....with



Newsletter #46

December 2011

Editor: Dawn Rueckl

EDITOR'S NOTES

♪ It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas...♪ After a spectacular autumn, winter arrived all at once, and I say, let it come! There is nothing like being enveloped by the silence of low-lying clouds dropping an ocean of huge snowflakes all around you. There is power in silence. It is an introspective space, a place of peace and harmony. And peace and harmony is what the Christmas season is all about. I am reminded of an event that my 14 year old son attended this fall called We Day. Held in Vancouver, it is organized by Free the Children, a youth driven organization dedicated to empowering youth worldwide through education. We Day is an annual rally, held originally in Toronto and Vancouver and now in 5 Canadian cities, where 18,000 youth gather to celebrate their power to change the world. This year's speakers included Mikhail Gorbachev, Shaquille O'Neil, Mia Farrow. Past speakers have included the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Jessie Jackson, Jane Goodall. Big stuff. Their message to youth is simple: through your actions and choices, every day, you change the world. So be the change you want to see. I asked my son what speaker impacted him the most. It was the speaker that didn't speak at all, he said. Former child soldier Michel Chickwanine shared his story in silence, told through placards. He told of his capture, the brainwashing through violence and drugs, his escape, and his work to help liberate others. If you can imagine 18,000 energized Canadian youth brought to complete silence by this tragic tale told through simple statements, the effect would have been powerful. Tears, including my son's, filled the silence, but at the end, there was only hope. So for this Christmas season, take a moment in silence and allow it to fill you. Allow the tears for those who want, and then replace it with the hope for a better tomorrow. Feel the peace and harmony with the world around you. Celebrate and be joyful!



Seasons Greetings

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM ALL THE STAFF

Enjoy a fabulous Christmas and New Years.– Roland & Anne

I wish you a wonderful holiday season and a healthy & happy New Year – Wendy

Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for a happy new year! – Wilma & Trees

A very Merry Christmas and a happy healthy new year to all! – Lynda & her critters

May Peace, Health and Happiness be with you this holiday season. – Sharon

Rejoice in the blessings of Christmas Season.
– Darlene & Lynne

Peace on earth, and goodwill to all.
– Dawn

Wishing you all Good Health & Happiness in the New Year! — Patti

Wishing you all the joy, hope and wonder of the season - Happy Holidays! – Stephanie

Happy holidays! — Candace

Joyeux Noël! - Caitlin

May the warmth of the Christmas season stay with you now and through the New Year. – Aina & Shelley

Wishing all a very Merry Christmas and a healthy, happy and adventurous New Year! – Joan

Merry Christmas and happy New Year to all! – Marion



NEW TOURS!!

Please check with one of our offices or at your local travel agency for detailed itineraries, or visit our web site at www.wellsgreytours.com. Fares are per person based on double occupancy, and single and triple fares are available on most tours. Come travel with us!

TOUR NAME

DEPARTS

LENGTH

FARE

ARIZONA WINTER ESCAPE	January 23	16 days	\$3625
TEXAS WINTER ESCAPE	January 24	31 days	\$4660
LONG BEACH STORM WATCHING	February 5	5 days	\$920
LADIES ONLY WINTER WELLNESS	February 17	4 days	\$730
THEATRE IN SEATTLE with <i>Oklahoma! & Beauty & The Beast</i>	February 22	4 days	\$755
KOOTENAYS HOT SPRINGS	February 27	4 days	\$590
HARRISON HOT SPRINGS RETREAT	March 12	3 days	\$535
THEATRE IN SEATTLE with <i>Mamma Mia & Odd Couple</i>	March 23	4 days	\$735
HAWAII CRUISE on the Oosterdam	April 19	17 days	from \$2670
40TH ANNIVERSARY ALASKA CRUISE on the Zuiderdam	May 19	8 days	from \$1460
EVERY DESTINATION HAS A STORY: SLATON, TX	May 30	11 days	\$2790
INSIDE PASSAGE & SKEENA TRAIN	June 3	8 days	\$1775
COAST TO COAST BY TRAIN	June 3	15 days	\$5825
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR	June 13	17 days	\$4295
SCENIC TRAINS	June 19	6 days	\$1135
CALGARY STAMPEDE 100TH ANNIVERSARY	July 5	4 days	TBA
SCOTLAND	July 23	17 days	\$5695
BELLA COOLA & TWEEDSMUIR PARK	July 31	8 days	TBA
STEWART & STIKINE	August 9	13 days	TBA
HAIDA GWAII BY SAILBOAT	August 12	9 days	\$5595
HAIDA GWAII	August 15	7 days	\$2350
MARITIMES & NEWFOUNDLAND	August 30	25 days	\$5670
VANCOUVER TO SYDNEY CRUISE on the Volendam	September 26	30 days	TBA
CROATIA, SICILY & MALTA	October 10	23 days	\$7645
SOUTH OF FRANCE RIVER CRUISE	October 12	16 days	from \$6880
SOUTH AFRICA	November 2	19 days	\$9530
ANTARCTICA, SHILE & ARGENTINA CRUISE	January 7/13	28 days	from \$9075

WHAT'S COMING UP..... Call to get on list for advance notification for these tours!

Easter Tour – April

Mystery Tour – April

Victoria Gardens & Gourmet – June

North Cascades & Sun Mountain – June

Cats & Hello Dolly in Vancouver – April

Vancouver Island Small Ship Cruising – June

Kimberley Accordion Festival – July

Jersey Boys in Vancouver – September

This just in!! Michael Flatley's **Lord of the Dance** is coming to Abbotsford! Tour departs from Penticton, Kelowna and Vernon only, March 3, 2 days. Call now and we will send info as soon as it is ready!!

INTERNATIONAL TOURS 2012

The planning is almost complete for our international line up of adventures for 2012. Already sold out are Eastern Cuba (two departures) for January & February and Machu Picchu & Galapagos in April. Currently in the planning stages is a Holland America cruise from Vancouver to Sydney, Australia, departing September 26 for 30 days. Here is the rest of the line up:

Scotland - This itinerary is modelled after the sold out Ireland tours we have offered the past two years. Departing July 23 for 17 days, this leisurely itinerary allows for a thorough exploration of this dynamic country. Highlights include 3 full days in Edinburgh, with a free day to research family roots if desired; the Highlands with whiskey tasting, Inverness, Culloden and Loch Ness; the remote Orkney Islands; picturesque Isle of Skye with Jacobite Steam Train and Fort William; and the Edinburgh Military Tattoo as a grand finale. With influences the world over, the Scottish people and their culture call to us all.

Croatia, Sicily & Malta – Located at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, Croatia, Sicily and Malta saw successive invasions through the ages - Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Crusaders, French and English. They have retained many magnificent relics of the past, but they offer much more: quaint fishing villages, magnificent mountain scenery, bustling markets and warm friendly people. Highlights include 10 nights in Croatia with Zagreb, Plitvice Lakes, Istria Peninsula and Dubrovnik; Sicily's Mount Etna, Taormina, Palermo and Agrigento; and the ancient historic sites in Valletta, the capital of the tiny country of Malta.

South of France River Cruise – Hot on the heels of our successful 2011 Danube River cruise with Avalon Waterways, we offer the South of France, cruising on the Rhône River on board the Avalon Scenery from Port St. Louis on the French Riviera to Chalon-sur-Saône in Burgundy. The tour features 3 nights on the French Riviera with touring in Monaco, Cannes, and along the Cote d'Azure. On board, ports of call include Arles and Avignon in Provence, Tournon and Lyon in the Beaujolais wine region, and Macon and Tournus in Burgundy. The tour ends with 3 nights in Paris with Notre Dame Cathedral, Versailles and the Louvre.

South Africa – Last offered in 2008, this tour captures the extraordinary diversity that is Africa in one country. The international urban evolution is found in Johannesburg and Pretoria. Four days of luxurious adventure on safari is spent in the private Sabi Sands Reserve bordering Kruger National Park. The traditionalist cultures of the Swazi and the Zulu are visited en route to the Dolphin Coast. And the colonist era is discovered in Cape Town and the Winelands.

MAGICAL DATES

No, we are not referring to dinner with Merlin or a movie with your fairy godmother! The health benefits of dates (the fruit) have been documented for millennium in countries of the east and are just becoming more widely known in the west. Although natural practitioners have them healing everything from abdominal cancer to intestinal disorders to weaknesses in libido, there are some benefits that are irrefutable. Dates are high in fibre, thereby helping digestion and blood sugar levels. They are also packed with polyphenols, powerful antioxidants. They are very high in carbohydrates and calories, making them an extremely efficient food, and they are an excellent source of potassium, which is good for your heart. So this Christmas, reach for the Matrimonial Bars and enjoy!

Matrimonial Bars

350°, 45min

1¾ cup quick oats 1 tsp baking soda
1¾ cup flour 2 cups dates,
 chopped

chopped
1 cup brown sugar ½ cup water
1 cup butter ½ cup white sugar
1 large egg

1 tsp salt
Combine oats, flour, brown sugar, butter, salt, baking soda to crumbly. In saucepan, cook dates with water and white sugar til pulp is soft. Layer half the oat mixture, press down, then add dates and rest of oat mixture in 9x13 pan.



NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

A brand new tour has been planned for June of 2012, a tour that explores in depth the province of Newfoundland & Labrador. Staff member Joan Niemeier journeyed to the far east of Canada this summer to augment the research done over the past year by tour planner Dawn Rueckl. They are confident that they have come up with the best itinerary to capture the natural wonders, the maritime history, and the incredible personality of the people of Newfoundland & Labrador.

For years, Newfoundland has been an integral and unique part of our Atlantic Canada tour, and it still is. How is the June trip different from our annual fall tour?

Our September tour touches on the highlights of the province: Gros Morne National Park, the Viking Trail, maritime lifestyle, and historic St. John's. Our June tour visits these as well, but it also includes so much more.

We begin in St. John's with an introduction to the spirit of Newfoundland, then meander through the fishing villages of the Baccalieu Trail, learning their role in international communications across the Atlantic. On to the Bonavista Peninsula to visit lighthouses, Mockbegger Plantation and Trinity, capital of the salt fishing trade in the 1700s. In Gander, we speak with one of the coordinators of the land efforts when 38 planes landed unexpectedly on September 11, ten years ago. Twillingate is famous for ic berg viewing and also for the Prime Berth Fishing Museum, where we experience the gregarious personalities and lifestyles of Newfoundland fishermen.

In Labrador, the wild lands await. We learn about 16th century Basque whalers at Red Bay National Historic Site, then we have the unique opportunity to overnight at Battle Harbour, which was for two centuries the thriving economic centre of Labrador as a mercantile saltfishing community. Then we travel the newly opened final phase of the Trans-Labrador Highway that connects western Labrador to the rest of the province. After exploring the fur trading and military history of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, we take the ferry overnight through scenic Lake Melville and into the Labrador Sea.

Back in Newfoundland, we cruise amongst the iceberg giants at St. Anthony, explore the Viking Trail and ancient cultures in L'Anse aux Meadows and Port au Choix, then marvel at nature's beauty in Gros Morne National Park. Finally, we are Screeched in as honorary Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Although your photo albums will be filled with wondrous sites and beauty untold, it will be your hearts that will be the most full – with the spirit of the people.



What beats his chest and swings from Christmas Cake to Christmas cake?

Tarzipan!

Which reindeer has the cleanest antlers?

Comet!

What kind of bread do elves use to make sandwiches?

Shortbread!

Which of Santa's elves is the best singer?

Elpis Presley!

THE Wonder OF CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS IN CANADA *A celebration from many Nations*

We are blessed in Canada with a rich diversity of cultural traditions, made possible by our history of immigration and policies of multiculturalism. This is reflected in our Christmas traditions, which have originated and developed from many countries.

From the earliest days of our history, France has given us its celebration of the Nativity, and with it, the Angels, Shepherds and Wise Men. Many of the oldest carols originate from France. German traditions gave us the Christmas tree and its many ornaments. From England came the idea of greeting cards. These appeared as early as the 15th century but it wasn't until the late 1700s that merchants began to send cards to their customers around the New Year. This caught on quickly in Europe, especially with the new printing process called lithography that developed in 1796.

Ireland has bequeathed us the ancient Gaelic custom of putting lights in windows, and the United States has provided our version of Santa Claus. In addition, Czechoslovakia and Japan have produced a flood of Christmas tree and interior home decorations of all kinds.

40TH Anniversary Alaska Cruise Update **Send us your stories and pictures!**

What a party this will be! Already we have over 530 people signed up for our 8-day Alaska cruise with Holland America on the Zuiderdam, departing May 19. And space is running out. Cabins are very limited, with primarily obstructed view outside and deluxe verandah cabins left in our block. Book soon or you will miss the boat altogether!

Staff has been busy planning events, games and activities for the cruise. For anyone who has been with us on an Anniversary tour before, one of the highlights is the Nostalgic Slide Show. Roland takes us back in time to the early days of Wells Gray Tours, sharing photos and stories about the evolution of group travel over the past decades. What fun!

This time, we are asking for your help. We want you to share some of your favourite stories from past tours. Send us a picture and the accompanying story that goes with it, and we will endeavour to include it in the nostalgic slide show. We are looking for stories that share emotion – laughter, hope, melancholy. And we are looking for these to share something about Wells Gray Tours and how travel has grown and changed through the years. We can't promise to use everything, but we would be most appreciative if you would share your memories with us. So send in your favourite photos with the story behind the picture, tell us what tour you were on and in what year, and if possible, let us know who was the tour director.

We are thrilled to be welcoming Kim and Alton Stone of Kamloops on our Anniversary Cruise. They won a cruise for two that was given away in partnership with Kamloops' NL Radio. The give-away celebrates the 30th anniversary of morning DJ Peter Olsen with the station, and we are excited to have Peter and his wife joining us as well. When Kim won the draw, she couldn't contain her excitement. She and Alton have been married for 15 years and never took a honeymoon. Their children are now in their teens, and they have not been away on vacation without them.

What a celebration this is going to be!
We could not be happier for them.

So what are you waiting for? Get on board – this is a party you do not want to miss!



Where did the Mystery Tour go?

Yes, we do get asked this quite often. Potential Mystery tour recruits check out the clues, waffle for a few days, then miss out because the tour has sold out. Such is the nature of our Mystery Tours – once you have gone, you keep coming back!

So where did the Mystery tours go in 2011? The fall mystery trip took in the attractions of coastal Washington State, including the Long Beach area just north of famed Oregon Coast. Highlights included lovely Semiahmoo Resort, a private charter for a cruise amongst the San Juan Islands, the Oysterville Sea Farms, mayor's welcome in Montesano, and Silverlake Beach Resort on Puget Sound. The spring trip went to Florida, starting in Orlando and heading down to the Florida Keys.

Thus is the adventure. How often these days do you leap into the unknown, take risks, give in to the journey? Go on – try it. Experience the comradery of a Mystery tour in 2012!



TO EXPRESS OUR APPRECIATION...

Wells Gray Tours is most appreciative of our clients' loyalty and the trust they place in us to provide quality travel experiences around the world. The holiday season is a wonderful time to thank you, and we are doing so by introducing two new Customer Appreciation rewards.

For many years, we have been honouring our Silver (25 tours/150 days) and Gold (50 tours/300days) travelers, but now we have added a Bronze category as well. Clients who have travelled on 12 tours or 75 days with us will be honoured with a coveted Wells Gray Tours vest and a bronze name tag. We have also bumped up the rewards for our Silver and Gold categories, and we are happy to provide these increases retroactively to existing Silver & Gold members – just give our office a call.

Starting this year, we will also honour the person who has travelled the most with us in the current calendar year. A client joked about this on recent tour, since they had done so much travelling with Wells Gray Tours in 2011, and we thought, hey, that's a great idea! We will honour the winning client with a gift certificate towards their next trip with us.

It is just one more way we can say thanks to you!

TRAVEL TID BITS

WELLS GRAY TOURS WELCOMES NEW TOUR DIRECTOR — We are pleased to announce that Marion Wienhold has joined the Wells Gray team as our new tour director. A local Kamloopsian, Marion has been working for such notable companies as Goway and Jonview, and she has been in touch with us over the years. We are excited to have her on board as she brings considerable tour directing experience to our company, and we look forward to many years of travel adventures with Marion.

GRATUITY SURVEY RESULTS — On the request of clients, we ran a survey for several months asking clients if they prefered to have gratuities for tour directors and drivers included in the tour fare or if they wished to handle this on their own. The results were clear: clients prefer to handle gratuities on their own but they appreciate guidelines for appropriate amounts. Thank you for your input.

ARIZONA TOUR REVAMPED — Due to low bookings on both the Interior and Victoria's Arizona tours for this winter, we have combined the itineraries and are now offering one departure. The tour originates in Victoria and overnights in Kamloops, then heads south. Both itineraries gained some and lost some. The new itinerary features 2 nights in Las Vegas, 2 nights in St. George with Zion National Park, Grand Canyon, 3 nights in Sedona with Verde Canyon Railroad and jeep tour, and 5 nights in Scottsdale at the Chaparral Suites Resort. Travel by coach down and fly home. Get away this winter!

CHECK YOUR PASSPORT — There is nothing like anticipating a tour for months and months, then going to get your passport when you are packing and finding out that it is expired! Don't let this happen to you! Take a moment to check your passport expiry date and put it on the calendar to renew if necessary. Remember that many countries require your passport to be valid for six months after your return date. We don't want you to be disappointed.

INTERNATIONAL TOURS FOR 2013 — A recent product development meeting brought forth many ideas for international departures for 2013. Because we know you like to plan in advance, we thought we would share what we will offer. Due to numerous requests, Ireland and Iceland will be back on the books for 2013. Machu Picchu & Galapagos Islands sold out, so we will offer again in March 2013. In keeping with our rising interest from clients for river cruising, next year we will investigate a Russian cruise from Moscow to St. Petersburg on the Volga and Svir Rivers. Our European destination will be Scandinavia, and in Asia we return to Vietnam & Cambodia. Rounding out the slate of tours will be New Zealand and Australia in the fall. Get your name on the list for first notification when these are planned.

CHRISTMAS HOURS — Wells Gray Tours will observe the following hours for the Christmas season: closed December 26, December 27 and January 2.

For detailed itineraries on tours or for reservations, contact one of the following offices or your travel agent:

KAMLOOPS
VERNON
KELOWNA
PENTICTON

250 Lansdowne Street, Kamloops BC, V2C 1X7
4 - 3009 - 43RD Avenue, Vernon BC, V1T 3I4
103 – 3001 Tutt Street, Kelowna BC, V1Y 2H4
100 - 159 Wade Ave. E., Penticton BC, V2A 8B6

250-374-0831
250-545-9197
250-762-3435
250-493-1255

or visit our website at

www.wellsgraytours.com
800-667-9552

